A

LETTER

On Occaſion of the

PUBLIC ENQUIRY

Concerning the moſt fit and proper

BREAD

To be aſſized for general Uſe.

[Price Six-pence.]

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To be aſſized for general Uſe:

SHEWING

the Difficulty of executing the Act of the 31ſt Geo. II. in a beneficial manner to the Poor; the conſtant Uſage and Cuſtom with regard to Bread for many Centuries; the folly of eating Bread known to be made white by Art and Adulteration, and the great Advantages of eating pure Bread made of all the Flour, including the Heart of the Wheat, as the moſt ſalutary, agreeable and nutritive Aliment. Recommended as an Object of a very ſerious and important Nature.

By an Advocate for Public Welfare.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Dear SIR,

I AM glad to find you are well pleaſed, that the Houſe of Commons have entered again ſo ſeriouſly into the conſideration of the quality of our bread, and the means of rendering it cheaper to the poor. The attempt made in 1768, proved abortive from various cauſes, but particularly the oppoſition then made by the Mealmen and Bakers; though ſome of them had candour enough to acknowledge, that a more ſalutary, more agreeable, and yet cheaper bread might be made, than that which is in common uſe in theſe cities. I hope our leaders will ſuc-

ceed better on this occaſion, if not in obtaining the utmoſt of their wiſhes in behalf of the poor, yet in providing ſome regulations which may anſwer, in the degree, the happy end propoſed, of furniſhing nouriſhment upon cheaper and better terms. Bread hath been rendered the dearer by a diſtinction of qualities; for whilſt in theory we have endeavoured to mend it, in practice we have confounded diſtinctions, and brought ourſelves into difficulties.

Refinements naturally grow out of luxury: if one part of the people lives better than uſual, the other muſt live the worſe. Whilſt plenty keeps pace with extravagance, the mode of living, in every claſs, may be improved; but as ſoon as the extravagance creates neceſſity, a reformation muſt take place.

We ſhould not however complain of the common people; we have taught them to be dainty. With regard to the fertility of our ſoil, and our ſkill in agriculture, we ought to be grateful to Providence for aſſigning us the garden of the earth; but as penury follows cloſe at the heels of prodigality, we may, by an unneceſſary expence for man, and the food of ſuperfluous brutes, create that ſcarcity which we are too apt to aſcribe to unfavourable ſeaſons, and the avaricious monopolies of dealers in corn. That we muſt pay a high price for our bread whilſt we pay ſo high a price for our land, and whilſt we have ſo vaſt a property in circulation, is beyond all diſpute; but time and neceſſity will bring things round again, and the

labourer find the means of living, as well as the lord. I doubt if we ſhall ever have plenty of grain for men, whilſt we are ſo profuſe in the expence of it for horſes for pleaſure. In time paſt, many of us have been fed on barley bread, rye, or wheat mixed with rye; but in general, it ſeems as if we were favourites of heaven, in plenty of wheaten bread. Whatever mixtures of grain, or qualities of bread might be the food of ſome of our anceſtors, the common ſtandard of bread, from *Alfred*'s time, down to the eighth of Queen *Anne*, was three-fourths of the wheat, which repreſented all the flour. And the aſſize actually made by *Henry* III. I underſtand to have been founded on the ſame principle. It was thought proper, not to leave the poor

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at the mercy of the Baker, but to tell them clearly and *intelligibly*, what parts of the wheat they ought to be ſupplied with for their bread, as well as what they ſhould pay for it, according to the price of the grain. I ſay the *Baker*, becauſe he was then conſidered as the only manufacturer. The Miller was under his direction, and Mealmen were not then neceſſary, as they now really are. In ſuch vaſt cities as theſe, we could not be ſecure of a ſufficient ſupply without ſuch intermediate men. The quality of the bread in thoſe early days being aſcertained, *viz.* made of three parts of the wheat; by this very plain and ſimple method of diſtinguiſhing, our forefathers knew what they were eating. The wheat being fairly ground and fairly bolted,

the labourer and mechanic was ſo far upon a level with the prince, by knowing that if his wheat weighed, for inſtance, 57lb. to the buſhel, he was then to have 42¾ pounds of flour, of which he was to make his bread. I do not ſay, but that ſome might eat finer and ſome coarſer bread, but this ſeems to have been the ſtandard, ſo far as the laws aſcertained the weight of bread.

It might then be as well known as it is now, that with the addition of ſalt and water and yeaſt, 14lb. of ſuch flour would make a loaf weighing 17lb. 6oz. It is true, that if we bolt ſoon after grinding, we ſhall have ſo much the leſs flour, eſpecially in wet weather; and if the flour is quite freſh from the mill it will imbibe the leſs water, and produce the leſs weight in bread, though

though the bread being rightly made may be the ſweeter.

Experience proved that the act of Queen *Anne* would not anſwer the purpoſe intended; therefore a *new* attempt was made. At the cloſe of the reign of his late Majeſty *George* II. a certain citizen and lawyer, by name *Dickenſon*, a very honeſt man as far as I know, inſtead of reverting to the old law, which had ſtood the teſt of ſo many ages, thought of a *new device*, which had ſhew, but not ſubſtance; it would not do for the latitude of great cities. This gentleman, not ſufficiently conſidering either what paſſed from *Alfred* to *Anne*'s reign, nor from her's to *George* II. applied to parliament. He indeed would have only *two ſorts* inſtead of three, and theſe two ſorts were

were to be called *wheaten* and *houſe-hold*; and he propoſed to divide the flour, ſo that when the beſt kind of bread coſt *four*, the other ſhould coſt but *three*; perhaps with good judgment believing, that if the difference was leſs, the diſtinction would be ſoon confounded. However, it was to be enacted into a law to be in this proportion, according as the price of wheat ſhould be on a medium, the quartern loaf of wheaten bread was, (according to the uſual deciſion of the magiſtrate) in the proportion of eight-pence, and the houſhold loaf of the ſame weight (*viz.* 4lb. 5oz. 8dr.) only ſix-pence.

It is eaſy to imagine, that the expence of manufacturing of one kind, being as much as the other, and the charge from the time the wheat is

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in the mill, to the time we eat the loaf, being computed near *nineteen* ſhillings on the quarter, the difference in quality of ſuch flour muſt be very great. The Baker could not poſſibly ſell ſixpenny loaves in a ſufficient number to *live* by his trade, unleſs he made them of a great part of the pollard and fine bran, which very few people chuſe to eat, when better is ſet before their eyes, in every Baker's ſhop.

I have often heard people of condition talk of *brown* bread without the leaſt knowledge of the quality, as if it muſt be good and wholeſome becauſe *not* white. God hath given the *poor* man, as well as the *rich* one, the ſenſe of ſmelling and taſting; and he will alſo find, what will nouriſh him beſt, and keep his body free from unnatural heat

and

and coſtiveneſs. The fact is, that Bakers in general declined making of this *houſehold* bread, becauſe they *could* not live by it; and the people led them into it, becauſe they *would* not live upon it. Thoſe who had but little to eat except bread, thought they had a good title to the good bread, if they could pay for it. We are all free, and when we can come at good things honeſtly, why ſhould we not have them? The common people rejecting what they called *brown bread*, immediately took to the *wheaten*, which they call *white* bread. The Baker obſerving the humour, upon the article of *whiteneſs*, was to make his bread white tho' he ſhould have mixed it with Arſenic; and in conjunction with the Miller, and the Mealman, who are frequently the ſame

ſame perſon, began to play the moſt injurious tricks that any poor nation was ever curſed with. A groſs impoſition taking place with regard to the parts of the wheat, or quality of the flour of which our bread was made, added to the tricks of the Baker, to make it as *white* as poſſible, our bread has been ſo adulterated as to deſtroy vaſt numbers of people, particularly infants; a thing hardly known among *Barbarians*.

Every perſon who knows any thing of bread, in its pure ſtate, muſt be ſenſible that the true colour of it, has a yellow caſt; and unleſs you take the very heart of the fineſt wheat only, it will not be white, *without art*; whatever tends to whiten bread beyond the genuine flour, tends to the adulteration of it, whether this is done by allum,

a mixture of ſtale petrified flour, by keeping flour in general too long, or by other tricks which Bakers in great towns are taught, as the myſtery of their trade.

In the mean time our common people, as the people often do in all countries, have taken much pains to impoſe upon themſelves, with regard to the ſounds of words, though it is evident that *true genuine bread*, is neither *white* nor *brown*. Thus we have been floating in a ſea of ignorance and deluſion, through mere prejudice.

Aſk a *London* Baker of what parts of the wheat his bread is made, and he frankly acknowledges he cannot tell; and how ſhould he? He can buy only what is to be ſold; and the quality is not aſcertained with any

any ſuch preciſion as to enable him to anſwer the queſtion. He, *poor man*, does the beſt he can, not to give a ſweet wholeſome aliment, but ſomething which is *white*. He knows that bread made of a proper proportion of the wheat, not only differs in colour, but is moiſter at the end of ten days than his the third day; likewiſe that it is ſweeter, and has the native grateful flavour of the wheat, as the God of Nature hath given it, and not as it hath been abuſed by the works of the Devil. And what hath been the operating cauſe of this miſchief? An attempt to aſſize different qualities of bread. People may eat what they pleaſe, but if there was only one ſtandard for *bread*, as there is for our *coin*, we ſhould have a fairer chance of eating it pure.

Mens deſires increaſe with their wealth, and they prey upon one another, in the iſſue bringing on a general calamity. Is it not a trick to pretend that in the *wheaten* bread in queſtion, only two thirds of the flour that the wheat produces, is given? There is good reaſon to believe that five parts in ſix of it are uſed. They regrind and doctor up their flour in ſuch a manner, that, with the addition of the arts of the Baker, this ſame *white bread* is ſo dry, and huſky, as to become very diſagreeable after the ſecond day. It ought likewiſe to be particularly remarked, that the more bread we eat of the firſt day's baking, as now practiſed, ſo much the greater quantity will be wantonly expended. Thus we flaſh ourſelves with a double-edged ſword:

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we conſume a commodity which in dry weather, and ſmall loaves, is hardly eatable the *ſecond* or *third* day; and we expend ſo much the more, becauſe we are for that reaſon tempted to eat it on the *firſt*.

It ought to be remembered *for our contentment*, that let us make the moſt ſalutary and judicious regulations imaginable, if the wheat in general happens one year to be worſe than another, it muſt naturally follow that the bread will be inferior in quality. But ſtill we may know what we are eating; and if the law requires all the heart and ſubſtance of the wheat, as I apprehend to be the caſe before us, we may expect true, good, and genuine bread; and thoſe who can afford to pay for it, have as good a title to it as the *greateſt*.

We went on well, as far as appears, for above eight hundred years: but in the reign of Queen Anne, it was thought proper that there ſhould be a *new aſſize*, and that three ſorts of bread ſhould be aſſized. This was eaſy in ſpeculation, but not in practice. If the Parliament had required us to eat plumb-cake, ſeed-cake, or ſugared cake, we ſhould have known that currants, ſeed, and ſugar conſtituted the difference; but from the moment the law made diſtinctions in the diviſion of the flour for three different kinds of bread for common uſe, we were expoſed to the mercy of the Mealman and the Baker to give us what they pleaſed, and call it by what name they pleaſed: we could only judge whether the bread pleaſed us or not. —Indeed the honeſt Mealman, who meant

meant to bring good flour to market, found it almoſt impoſſible to divide his flour and bran properly, and puzzled the Baker as well as the conſumer. He could not make ſuch a conſiderable difference in price, unleſs the *firſt* ſort had all the good parts of the wheat, and the *third*, a large portion of the pollard and bran. However, the law took place, and the Miller, the Mealman, and the Baker, began to divide, and ſub-divide; and inſtead of flour for bread, and the bran that remained, according to ancient practice, whereby the beggar as well as the prince was pleaſed, aſſize bread became a myſtery, and we no longer knew what we were eating. The Miller and Mealman divided he flour, but in the attempt to prepare one part for *white*, another for *wheaten*, and a

third for *houſhold* bread, the inferior kind could have no portion of the heart of the wheat, and became diſagreeable to the taſte of thoſe accuſtomed to finer bread: Thus I underſtand that the houſhold was rejected by thoſe who could afford to pay for better bread; and in great towns the firſt kind was almoſt the only one conſumed.

Millers and Mealmen ſay, that four buſhels of wheat, of a medium weight, produce three buſhels of flour of 56 lb. to the buſhel.

Suppoſing then the medium weight of wheat to be 57 lb. the weight of 1 quarter of wheat is — lb. 456
and the flour produced, 6 buſhels at 56 lb. per buſhel, lb. 336
But three *fourths* of the wheat is 342 lb. and if the Miller

is right, includes 6lb. of fine pollard. But this I apprehend depends on the quality of the wheat, the ſeaſon, the Miller's allowance, &c.

I will call the produce of the wheat for *aſſize bread* - lb. 342

I have ſeen wheat of 59lb. to the buſhel, (which *I ſuppoſe* 2 lb. better than the medium weight) produce in flour *per* quarter of wheat lb. 358

You may perceive from hence how much depends upon the quality of wheat, and the manner in which it is ground and bolted. In the laſt caſe, the breakage was not above half a pound in a buſhel; whereas in the common run of wheats, duſt, grinding, and bolting, it may be eſtimated at 1½ lb. *per* buſhel. This is ſuppoſed, when the Miller ſays that 8 buſhels of wheat pro-

produce 6 buſhels of flour: But if a quarter of wheat (of 57 lb. to the buſhel conſidered as the medium weight,) produces flour, or ſo nearly real flour, *viz.* — lb. 342 what would we wiſh for more? Whatever part of ſuch flour any particular community rejects, muſt appear to be in rebellion againſt Providence. It is ſowing of fooliſhneſs, to reap poverty and diſtreſs. What then ſhall we ſay, when we are told that only two thirds of the flour (underſtood to be the fineſt parts of it) is uſed in our wheaten bread? Were this true, we ſhould reject, as not good enough for us, in every quarter of wheat, flour — lb. 114
And uſe only — 228
But if the fact is, that they make the bread, as far as five parts in ſix of the flour, or lb. 285, we ſtill loſe

loſe (reſpecting our particular conſumption) — — lb. 57

I have heard it doubted whether they do not uſe the whole flour, notwithſtanding they make their bread ſo white; but it can hardly be ſuppoſed poſſible that they ſhould be able to whiten it ſo much, or be in any capacity of carrying on ſo groſs a deceit by making us pay, as if they uſed only two thirds of the fineſt parts, when they take into the ſame bread, the other third, being the coarſeſt parts. And foraſmuch as it is incredible that they ſhould uſe only two thirds, I take it upon the more probable ſuppoſition, that they employ *five ſixths* parts, and reaſon upon this principle, though in effect it is *one ſixth* in favour of the Mealman and Baker.

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Conſider at what a prodigious diſadvantage we eat our preſent *aſſized wheaten bread!* If upon every quarter, we reject as *offal*, for the uſe of other people, who perhaps work much harder than ourſelves, 57 lb. then upon our conſumption in theſe cities, of 600,000 quarters, we reject — lb. 34,200,000 which made into bread at 14 lb. of flour to 17lb. 6oz. is above 42 millions of pounds.

The ordinary computation of the conſumption of one perſon, being one quarter of wheat a year, or about 1lb. of bread *per* day, it is very evident, that if we reject one ſixth part of our flour, we leave near 100,000 inhabitants to eat *offal*, or have no bread at all; or in another more exact view, we put them in a ſtate of extravagancy ſo extremely per-

pernicious in the example, that were it to prevail univerſally over the kingdom, and this offal were to be conſumed by animals, *famine* muſt immediately prevail; or, all our arts and ingenuity, all our labour, and the ſweat of our brows, muſt be given to foreigners for corn, though we live in ſo fertile a country!

This is the tendency, my dear Sir, of departing from the line which our forefathers marked out, and which the finger of heaven ſo evidently points at. Let the poor be made ſenſible of their danger from their own feelings, and the dearneſs of their bread, and one would imagine that the loud and ſweet voice of truth would be heard from the market-place, and fire them with a juſt ſenſe of their condition; and their unhappy deluſion in this inſtance,

would

would ceaſe. When they are rightly informed of this matter, we may hope that their natural good ſenſe will revert to them, and co-operate with their ſelf-preſervation.

You may perceive what a prodigious difference it makes, whether we eat our bread of all the flour, (occaſionally including a few pounds of pollard) or reject a ſixth part; or if it were true, what the Millers and Mealmen pretend, if we reject a third part.

If upon the fineſt bread throughout the whole kingdom, we could ſave upon the article of wheat only a twentieth part, it is of ſuch high importance, as to amount to 300,000 quarters of wheat yearly, on our growth of *ſix millions*. The average or medium of our exports, when we were happy enough to export, did not amount to above a *thirtieth* part,

or

or 200,000 quarters, and yet this was one of the richeſt jewels in our commercial diadem.

You will undoubtedly join with me in this opinion, when you conſider that it brought us in a good half million of gold and ſilver, in aid of the enormous ſum which we pay to foreigners, for the intereſt of their money; and of the more enormous circulation of paper credit. Alas! my friend, we have lately found, at leaſt in private intercourſe, that paper credit had enchanted us; but the charm is in ſome meaſure diſſolved, and I hope we ſhall no longer tread upon ſuch fairy ground, that the mercantile part may not tell us, they know not what to-morrow will bring forth. Let us not treat our *corn* as we have done our *credit*, nor think either inexhauſtible: but to

indulge the conſideration, and examine a little farther into the circumſtances of our preſent ſituation with reſpect to our *wheaten* bread.

If three parts in four of the *wheat* is really *flour*, as it hath been deemed through ſo many ages; and that this ought to be employed in bread, fit for the common uſe of the firſt people in the land, we are loſing very conſiderably, I mean with reſpect to the general conſumption of ſuch *wheaten bread* upon the preſent aſſize.

In this view our imprudence is manifeſt; the rich are enemies to the poor, and the poor to the rich; and we cannot account for our conduct without confeſſing that we all forget that Providence intended our bread ſhould be divided into *finer* and *coarſer*, or blended into a good and genuine middling kind; for otherwiſe

wiſe it is impoſſible to do juſtice to the poor, who gain their ſupport by the ſweat of their brows. If we can by any means deviſe a method of giving them a good bread, at a price leſs than that which they now pay, and make it anſwer all the purpoſes of life, it is an object of the higheſt importance; and ſo much the more, as the wheaten bread we eat is ſo imperfect in its quality.

Let us then revert to the practice of our forefathers, and make our beſt *genuine ſtandard bread* of three-fourths of the wheat; we ſhall then have nothing to enquire after, concerning this part of our aliment, but the medium weight of the wheat; ſubmitting to Providence with regard to the ſeaſons, as this will be ſome years heavier and produce more and better

flour than in others. If we take three-fourths of it, we ſhall eaſily learn the value of the other fourth; what it ſells for, and what are the *reaſonable* gains of the Miller and the Mealman, including the charge of grinding, bolting, &c. It will be eaſily computed, if theſe are competent to the ſupport of the dealer, or if they are extravagant and injurious to the poor.

It may be urged, that were the gains of the Mealman ſo great as ſome imagine, many more ſuch traders would riſe up in the community, and by their competition, the evil would cure itſelf. Whether their gain be really immoderate, or only ſuch as the importance of the traffic may entitle the trader to; ſtill the malady of an injudicious and extravagant conſumption remains. So

long

long as the populace run headlong into danger, by following the falſe ſcent of their temporal welfare, with reſpect to the *colour* of their bread, in a general view they muſt unavoidably ſuffer. If under a notion of *whiteneſs*, they hurt their health, or pay a higher price than they need, upon the cleareſt evidence of the price of wheat, it is abſurd to flatter them, or not to ſay, they are doing themſelves great miſchief.

So long as the aſſize on bread is made on the price of wheat, and neither the *quality* nor the *price* of the flour, of which it is made, clearly aſcertained, we ſhall never diſcover the true medium, either of the *price* which the bread ought to be at, or the *quality* it ought to be of; and we cannot tell whether juſtice be done or not, nor the degree in which

we are extravagant in the uſe of our wheat.

It is not eaſy to give a people relief againſt their will; but it ought to be ſuppoſed that they are capable of being taught what their real intereſt is, and that we have energy enough in government to carry into execution, a plan which promiſes ſo general a good. Truth is always too ſacred to admit of being dreſſed up in a diſguiſe, though her charms do not always operate potently, even where the health and preſervation of the people are moſt deeply concerned. One would imagine that when it is a queſtion, whether they will eat their bread cheaper and purer, or whether they will delude themſelves with falſe notions concerning the colour of it, without regard to its eſſential properties, it ſhould not require

quire much ſtrength of reaſon to trace out the truth. We all know how huſky and diſagreeable our preſent wheaten bread ſoon becomes; and we know how *dear* it is. Thoſe who have lived where genuine bread has been eaten, are ſenſible of the difference; and what a feaſt this is, the ſecond or third day, when our wheaten bread becomes dry and unpleaſant to the taſte.

It muſt be obſerved, that ſome of the bread which is conſumed in theſe vaſt cities, is made of flour which is perhaps two or three months old, and from this we cannot expect the ſame degree of ſweetneſs, as from that which is freſh. The ſtaler it is, the more water it will imbibe, for the emolument of the baker, and the dryer it will become in the

ſame

ſame time: But ſtill we might enjoy all the advantages which a great city will afford, in this part of our diet.

It cannot be doubted but that ſome of the inferior part of the wheat, call it coarſe flour or fine pollard, is intended by nature as a vehicle to aid digeſtion, by which nutrition is communicated, and all the animal functions invigorated. Nor need we to apply to the learned, but conſult our own feelings.

I am now recommending the *whole flour* of the wheat, with reſpect to the fineſt *aſſized* bread, which ſome imagine to be the object of a new law for town or country; whilſt the people of the United Provinces eat their ſtandard bread of the *whole wheat:* when this is ground they make bread of the meal, without taking any part out of it: they are

ſtrong,

ſtrong, and becauſe they are thrifty they are rich. It muſt certainly be in a great meaſure owing to our extravagance in the conſumption of our wheat, that all our additional improvements of land are inadequate to the increaſe of our conſumption of wheaten bread; and that we have heard ſo much of ſcarcity for many years paſt; threatening us as if neceſſity were coming as an armed man.

For my own part, I do not indulge expectations of any great diminution of the price of bread, ſo long as we are importing oats for the uſe of horſes. If a ſpirit of improvidency prevails ſo much amongſt the rich, the poor will take no thought for the morrow: But if upon this occaſion we could, by any ſalutary regulation, gain a fifteenth or even a twentieth part, it is a great object.

object: Five in the hundred on the food of 700,000 perſons, gains nouriſhment for 35,000 more; and if we can taſte the milk and honey of ſome promiſed land, in the ſweetneſs and purity of our bread, ſhall we diſdain the acceptance of ſuch a gift from Heaven? The object, when extended to the whole maſs of the people, as I have obſerved, may prepare the way for greater advantages. But if we conſider the variety of what the Bakers call Fancy Bread, which has been, and always will be, eaten in this land, according to the taſte and neceſſities of individuals, it baffles all computation what the real ſaving might be.

You aſk me, what is certainly intended by parliament? Upon my word, Sir, I do not know. I have not

not had leiſure to attend to what has paſſed; I am only giving you my thoughts from my own experience and obſervation.

I long for *better* bread; what we eat is ſo ungrateful, notwithſtanding we pay ſo dear for it. You remember that I once told you, it is the common practice of Bakers to ſell loaves of three or four days old for two-thirds or three-fourths of the eſtabliſhed price, ſo much is it acknowledged to diminiſh in value in ſo ſhort a time. I have this day eaten bread made of all the flour of the wheat, ſufficiently moiſt in the heart of the loaf, though it was a ſmall one, after being baked ten days. I muſt tell you more; it was baked by a *London* Baker, but not in his way of trade, and conſequently no attempt made

to *bleach* his loaf. There can be nothing more evident than the art which is uſed to whiten, when it is conſidered, that if you make bread at home by the hand of the moſt intelligent houſewife, of the ſame flour that the Baker makes his bread, yet hers ſhall be much inferior in colour, as it will be ſuperior in quality and taſte, and remain moiſter a much longer time. From all which it is evident that the colour depends chiefly upon art and adulteration, and can by no means be intitled to that preference which our deluſions have given it.

If the bread which I conceive to be the object of a new law, is made of three quarters of the wheat, according to the general expectation, it will challenge a preference, as being intrinſically better, as well as cheaper, than the preſent *wheaten* bread.

bread. If this cannot be now accompliſhed, in the reign of a prince whoſe natural temper and diſpoſition leads him to compaſſionate the poor, we muſt leave them to Providence. Whether theſe cities will be comprehended in the preſent bill, you will hear ſoon. If the Bakers were only *permitted* to make ſuch bread by aſſize, people of underſtanding would go to That Baker who made beſt, the bread which our forefathers found to be ſo *truly good*.

If this *flour*, for ſo we muſt call it, which repreſents three fourths of the wheat, were brought to market in ſacks marked *aſſize flour* (and ſurely there ought to be diſtinctions of marks on flour), I dare ſay numbers of Bakers would deſire to be ſupplied with it, and ſome Mealmen would

bring it, as ſoon as they found it vendable. The Baker knowing what part of the wheat his flour ought to be, would work it into bread with ſo much the more ſatisfaction; and being ſenſible that we meant to eat *genuine* bread, he would ceaſe to *whiten* it by any hurtful art. We might then know what we eat, and the trade would be more familiar to us. Whether the wheat be all of one kind, or *married*, which is the phraſe for mixing of wheats of diferent kinds, it would be eaſy for people of condition, by experiment, or by the compariſon with genuine bread made in their families, to know whether juſtice be done or not. The *myſtery* might be thus developed; our health and our pleaſure promoted; and our bread

be as much cheaper than it is now, as the gain on the flour will make it, by uſing all that the wheat produces. The charge of manufacturing it would ſtill continue the ſame, except that the diviſion of it would create the leſs labour.

To draw the line with preciſion, what is flour, the Bakers tell us that a *thirteen ſhilling cloth* is a rule in bolting the meal. Our Legiſlators have been as guarded as the nature of the caſe will allow; but in ſuch inſtances they are reduced to the neceſſity of receiving great part of their information from intereſted perſons.

The Magiſtrate conſiders the medium price of wheat one *ninth* below the higheſt price; ſo that ſuppoſing the wheat at 49 ſhillings the

	s.	d.
higheſt price, and about 40 ſhillings the loweſt, the putting it at 44*s.* is *per* buſhel,	: 5	: 6
And ſuppoſing the Baker to be the ſole manufacturer, the allowance made him by the magiſtrate, is ——	: 1	: 6
	7	0

This he computes makes three peck loaves, half part being wheaten, and half houſhold, *viz.*

1½ peck, or 6 quartern loaves *wheaten*, at 8 pence —	: 4	: 0
1½ peck, or 6 quartern loaves *houſhold*, at 6 pence —	: 3	: 0
which you ſee anſwers the regulation of ——	: 7	: 0

But you perceive what a latitude is left to the ſkilful Mealman, who knowing that the proportion vendable in *houſhold* bread is very ſmall, will make

make his flour for *wheaten* bread; for ſuppoſing the *twelve* loaves above-mentioned to be all wheaten, they would amount to - - 0 8 0
but all the advance would not center with the Baker.

To reduce the 7s. to the bread of all the flour, or three-fourths of the wheat, then 7*s*. value, in bread would be 12 loaves at 7d, which equals the above-mentioned. - - 0 7 0

It is obvious, that if the houſhold bread gives place ſo much to the wheaten, in theſe cities, ſo as to have but a ſmall conſumption, in this view we ſhould gain an eighth part by the middle bread. We ſhould indeed have but one kind aſſized, which I ſuppoſe the beſt for common uſe, and in the iſſue the cheapeſt.

In order to a cloſer inveſtigation of this article, not deceiving

ourſelves by appearances, we ſhall find, that the purity of our bread, with regard to what it is compoſed of, depends on the Baker and Mealman, as well as the conſiſtency of any law, ſupported by penalty.

If 57lb. is the medium weight of wheat, and three-fourths of the wheat is the whole flour (i. e. granting occaſionally 2 to 6lb. of pollard to make weight) how many quartern loaves can be made out of 342lb? we find that they are $97\frac{1}{7}$ which at 7 pence, is £. 2 17 0

This is ſuppoſed to allow for the coſt of the wheat, and all the charges, of manufactory, which ſtands nearly thus:

	l.	*s.*	*d.*
Coſt of the quarter of wheat, as above	2	4	0

Meetage,

Meetage, porterage, grinding and dreſſing	0. 3. 6			
Salt, yeaſt, coals, wood, journeyman-baker, and labourage,	0. 5. 6			
	0. 9. 0			
Deduct for the pollard and bran ſold,	0. 3. 6			
		0	5	6
Abſolute coſt — —		2	9	6

In this view, compared with the £. 2 17 above-mentioned, there remains ——— 7 6

Allowance for ſalt, yeaſt, &c. as above, —— 5 6

13 : 0

But the Baker ſays he can make but 96 loaves of genuine flour, whereas I make 97 $\frac{5}{7}$ from three-fourths of the wheat. If he makes but 96, his allowance appears to be 12*s.* *per* quarter,

quarter, being exactly what he is granted by the magiſtrate, according to ancient practice,—but this includes the Mealman's emolument.

To give you a clear idea, upon the *avowed principle* of the Mealmen (who all agree in the proportion of the diviſion of the houſhold or fineſt flour, though accounts differ in the other three ſorts) we muſt take *two* quarters of wheat together, to find fine flour ſufficient for *their avowed* wheaten bread.

			Per Sack of 280 lb.	
Houſholds, or beſt Flour, (*a*)	lb. 448 at 39*s.*		3	2 4
Seconds, - -	90 at 36*s.*			11 6
Thirds, or fine Middlings,	60 at 34*s.*			7 4
Coarſe Middlings,	74 at 24*s.*			6 4
	672 nearly the			4 8 0

(*a*) This term for fine flour miſleads, becauſe *houſhold bread* is the inferior bread, but it is in uſe.

I ſuppoſe the charge of grinding and dreſſing paid for in the ſale of the pollard and bran *(a)*.

Now to make wheaten bread upon their own principles; upon the *quantity of one* quarter, we muſt take 336lb. of the *houſhold flour* (of which only they pretend to make our bread) at 39s. *per* ſack of 280lb. £. 2 6 9

Magiſtrate's allowance to the Baker of 1s. 6d. *per* buſhel, — 12 0

2 18 9

But 96 quartern loaves ſold at 8d. produce — 3 4 0

Conſequently here is a *gain* or advantage of 0 5 3

(a) Here it may be obſerved, that ſkill in mixing wheats, and in grinding them, muſt neceſſarily render the greater quantity of flour: and by the manner of bolting, and mixing flour when bolted, 1*s.* or 2*s.* may be often gained, i. e. by making a greater quantity of *ſeconds* or *thirds*, and a leſs of the laſt denomination: but we muſt compute from a general principle, obſerving that the *oppoſition* made in 1768 took its riſe from *intereſt*.

Let

Let us ſee how it fares with the *houſhold bread*, made of the remainder of the

quarter of wheat, (*a*)	—	2	1	3
Baker's allowance	—		12	0
		2	13	3
96 loaves at 6d. amount to		2	8	0
Conſequently here the Baker falls ſhort	—		5	3

You ſee in this view, that the Baker cannot find his allowance of 12s. nor make any *ſuch* bread but at loſs.

Now let us take the *whole* of the two quarters of wheat, coſting	4	8	0
Baker's allowance of 1s. 6d. *per* buſhel, —	1	4	0
	5	12	0

Let us make it into the *genuine* bread propoſed,

(*a*) £.2 6 9 and £.2 1 3 (remainder of the ſeveral diviſions, though I doubt if their bread ſtuff is ſo good) make £.4 8 0.

viz.

viz. 192 loaves, at 7d.
they amount to the
ſum of — — 5 12 0

In this view, upon theſe two quarters there is no gain of 5s. 3d. as upon the wheaten bread, abovementioned, wherever it may center. The difference then is 2s. 7d. *per* quarter, and 96 loaves, with the addition of a farthing each (or 7¼d. *per* loaf) gives —— (*a*) 0 2 0

The manufacturers of bread will not then find ſo good account in the *bread of all the flour*, as in the *wheaten*, and therefore they oppoſe; and if they actually enjoyed ſuch an advantage, I aſk—Whether it ſhould, or ſhould not be provided for? Whether ſuch manufacturers are, or are not left in full power of *taking* it? Whether they will give us any inferior parts of the wheat,

(*a*) See note p. 45, for the *computed emolument*.

how-

however artfully managed? And whether we mean to ſuffer any diminution in the goodneſs and purity of the bread propoſed for the ſake of ¼d.?

Here we find ourſelves intereſted upon the ſolid principles of truth and juſtice, without which laws cannot be built on the *rock of ages*, but will tumble, as their foundation is laid in ſand.

You ſee the deluſion, where it *appears to me*, to begin; for the *Mealman* bringing his flour to market; often *houſing* it in warehouſes, and giving credit for two or three months to the Baker, with other contingent charges, muſt have a ſuitable conſideration for his riſque, diſburſe, and profit, or ſuch a vaſt metropolis could not be ſupplied.

We have conſidered how the Baker is to live, when perhaps he does not ſell above the produce of one quarter of wheat in the day,

and

and ſome not half ſo much: they muſt live, and pay their houſe-rent and taxes, and ſupport their wives and children, as good and uſeful members of the commonwealth. You perceive that I have no intentions to *ſtarve* them who *feed* us. The deeper inveſtigation of this object I leave to others; but I had rather a *farthing (a)* more each loaf, *viz.* 7¼d (which will amount to 2s. the quarter of wheat) ſhould be paid, than expoſe either Mealman or Baker to the temptation of lowering the quality of their bread, *ſtill* continuing to deceive, by rendering it as *white* as they can make it, inſtead of as ſweet and pure as it might be,

(*a*) A coinage of *farthings* would be of great conſequence to the poor, in this and many other articles.

from the parts of which it is compoſed.

The laws relating to bread have been always founded upon this principle, that the bread of a certain proportion in price, ſhall be made of a certain proportion of the wheat; but as it hath not been yet thought conſiſtent for the Legiſlature to annex any puniſhment upon a diſcovery of a deviation, it hath neceſſarily left a latitude for groſs impoſitions on the public.

If the middle bread in queſtion is to repreſent the whole flour, the beſt care ſhould be taken that it be *really* ſuch, that we may not be deprived of the advantage we are in purſuit of, for the general uſe. This deſerves a very ſerious conſideration. The *ſafeſt* way, *till we rectify prejudices*, may be to fix the aſſize on this

this kind of bread, and allow a *ſuitable price*; though we ſhould leave the houſhold bread as we find it.

If the bread propoſed were to coſt 7¼d. (ſuppoſing it really what it ought to be,) we ſhould ſtill have *ſeven loaves and three quarters of ſweet genuine bread*, for the price which we now pay for ſeven of our *wheaten artful bread, which ſo ſoon becomes dry and huſky*; and ſo much gained, would conſequently feed 75,000 people more, i. e. upon a compariſon of the quantity of wheaten bread which we now uſe, or the money we now pay. If we graſp at too much, we may looſe our object.

It is not but that there is a bread, which includes leſs finer parts of the wheat, *exceeding good*; but till we are brought to act right, it will avail but

but little. I have eaten excellent bread made of wheat of 59 lb. to the buſhel, out of which only 85 lb. had been taken from the quarter, (including the breakage) 387 lb. remaining for bread. Being wheat of 57 lb. *per* buſhel, I have computed upon 342 lb. This bread was ſo pleaſing to the palate, and broke ſo ſhort, as to be denominated *cake*, by a *marine* with whom I once converſed, and to whom it had been iſſued from the King's bakehouſe, as uſual to his Majeſty's ſhips in harbour.

Thoſe are but little acquainted with the nature of bread, who do not alſo know that a mixture of one third part in rye, as uſual in *Nottinghamſhire*, gives a coolneſs and moiſture to bread which renders it extremely agreeable. The merit of ſuch bread will find its way among thoſe who

are

are judges; in the mean while we muſt take mankind as we find them, every one in his humour, and leave ſomething to *time* for the radical cure of the political diſeaſe which has ſo long raged amongſt us, particularly in theſe cities.

There is a cloſe connection, and analogy, obvious to every common underſtanding, with regard to our rate of living, the *unneceſſary* quantity conſumed, and the price which one thing bears to another. The wheat goes through many hands before it comes to our mouths; and ſuch vaſt quantities cannot be brought to market, but at a conſiderable charge. Bakers, however uſeful and reſpectable, do not ride in coaches. Gentlemen muſt lower the ſtandard of *their* living before mechanics will become

wiſe. The whole machine is linked, and the circle made round.

If by any contrivance theſe can come at the object they are *accuſtomed to*, they will have it: meat, ſhoes, ſoap, candles, &c. muſt be cheaper than they are, before the Baker can bring himſelf into a ſtate of being free from the temptation of employing art, unleſs we allow him his uſual gain on our bread. And with ſome change of circumſtances the evil extends to the Mealman who dreams of a *plumb*.

Mealmen being under no coercive power, nor ſubject to any penalty, things may be juſt as they were before. The farmer will not ſell his corn cheaper, till the land is cheaper; and as to the ſeaſons, there ſeems to be no great room for expectation of any wonderful change

in

in them more than hath been for ten years paſt. I am not willing to be deceived by others, or cheated by my own credulity.

You will eaſily perceive, however ſpecious the explications on paper may appear, when given by intereſted perſons, no art or myſtery can have its ſecrets more involved than this of our bread, whilſt it depends on the mixtures of wheats, and their produce; as well as a ſenſe of moral obligation: and whether more juſtice will be done by any new act, with regard to the purity of our bread, than is by the old one, ſeems to reſt upon theſe foundations, the honeſty of the Mealman, and the prejudices of the conſumer of the bread with reſpect to its colour, and particularly the laſt: yet good bread will make its way,

though

though it ſhould not be ſo white; and as this can be eaten, with pleaſure, for a week, the gain on the difference of bread which muſt be eaten freſh, and conſumed in greater quantities, muſt be conſiderable.

In addition to what I have related, it is neceſſary to add, that the attempts made in 1768 to perplex the queſtion by advancing the neceſſity of reſerving certain parts of the wheat for gingerbread, ſea-biſcuit, and paſtry, it muſt be obvious that the quantity conſumed for ſuch uſes bears but a ſmall proportion to the bread. I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould touch the flour intended for bread, unleſs it be the pollards, which being reground mix very well for common ſale ſea-biſcuit, which is much inferior to that in the king's ſervice: and for gingerbread, which is hid in treacle,

treacle, the ſame pollard anſwers the purpoſe, and yet the common people devour it as a rarity. As to fine flour for paſtry, enough may be procured, where bread is *not aſſized*, or by appropriating wheat expreſsly to this and the purpoſes mentioned. Neither of theſe articles need encroach on the quality of our bread.

I remember when the commiſſioners for victualling the king's ſhips produced the ſpecimens of bread they were required to make, and brought them to the Committee of the Houſe of Commons in 1768: the *three-kinds* made out of wheat of 59 lb. to the buſhel, ground and bolted with the utmoſt care and exactneſs, were as follows:

80lb. taken out of 472:			remained for bread
90 Ditto	—	—	382
100 Ditto	—	—	372

Th

The members of the Houſe then preſent, agreed that theſe were all of an excellent quality; and when compared were all diſtinguiſhable; and they alſo agreed that the fineſt was of a ſtandard fit for a prince. It was evident that ſuch wheat and exactneſs, could not be the rule for *general* practice; for this, ſo conducted, broke but ½ lb. *per* buſhel, and I have calculated on 1½. This was of 59 lb. *per* buſhel, I have calculated on 57; and this was bread of 372 in 472 lb. including a ſmall portion of *pollard*.

What I am telling you is founded on experimental knowledge. I have attended the proceſs of weighing wheat before grinding, weighing it in meal, bolting, and then weighing the flour, and the pollard, and bran ſeparately; weighing the dough; weighing

weighing the bread hot; and again cold; producing the bread to able judges; eating it the firſt day, and the tenth; and it is upon this degree of knowledge I appeal to the common ſenſe of the people, high and low. I have no intereſt but the love of God, and my fellow-ſubjects; upon their account I now write: and curſed be the pen directed by a heart knowingly guilty of a falſhood, where ſo ſacred an object is concerned as the health, the pleaſure, and the *preſervation* of the poor!

The prejudices of the people are ſtrong; but they relate chiefly to the magic of the two ſyllables, *white* and *brown*. Their eyes will open, and I hope they will exert their reaſon in the cauſe of juſtice to themſelves, their children, and poſterity,

and contribute their endeavours that Millers, Mealmen and Bakers ſhall no longer make a ſecret of their trades, nor practice any forbidden arts; that whatever is enacted may be executed agreeably to the ſalutary intention of the legiſlature. Let us hope that ſuch act will be made as is moſt practicable, for That will probably prove the beſt.

Whatever ſhall be done for the people in general, we ſhould have a peculiar regard to the inhabitants of theſe cities, who in ſeveral reſpects are a diſtinct people; their number is vaſt, and their ſupply continued by a peculiar kind of providence. They ſee how the opulent live; they can emulate the wealthy only in the quality of *bread*, and of this they are particularly tenacious. At the ſame time it muſt be remembered,

that

that they have not ſeen any *genuine aſſized honeſt bread*, for theſe *three-ſcore years*, or more; owing to the ſeveral cauſes of which I have given you a detail.

In 1768, I enquired in near fifty Baker's ſhops, and hardly found *three* that made any *houſhhold bread*, and thoſe but ſmall quantities, the Bakers aſſerting that they could not live by it. I queſtion if there is any material alteration at this time: but if neceſſity hath compelled ſome people to eat it, and choice hath induced others, it ſtill bears but a trifling proportion to the *wheaten bread* conſumed.

The Bakers may remain at liberty to make their *rolls*, their *French* bread, and all the variety which they call Fancy Bread: but if we can eat more genuine bread *aſſized* than is now in

uſe, at a *ſeventh* or *fourteenth* part cheaper, the advantage will be very conſiderable.

I hope I have expreſſed myſelf in ſuch terms as you comprehend, and you will correct me where you find I err. The ſubject is very intereſting: it hath been rendered as abſtruſe and perplexing, as the diſcuſſion of it may be inſipid, to thoſe who are fonder of high ſauces, than of cheap, ſtrengthening, genuine aliment of the growth of their own land; but they ſhould remember, that what ſo deeply affects the poor, muſt ultimately involve the rich; and that the canine rage for riches, which predominates in theſe days, calls alike for the pity and contempt of philoſophy and religion.

Let us do what we will, there is no remedy againſt the effects of extravagance,

vagance, except frugality. And what a ſtriking inſtance of extravagance, is the importation of *oats* to ſo great an amount, and even for a ſucceſſion of years, as if we had mines of gold to pay for the produce of other countries to pleaſe our fancies, whilſt our own, the moſt fertile of all, is actually producing in vaſt abundance. This would not be neceſſary, if our *conſumption* was within any bounds of reaſon. We are ſaid to grow three millions of quarters of oats yearly, and yet we want much more! It is not the quantity of *water-gruel* that we conſume in theſe days of luxury, which occaſions the neceſſity of ſuch an import.

If we durſt enquire into the ſtate of the nation, with reſpect to *horſes which are neceſſary*, and *horſes* which are *not* neceſſary, we may find that,

except thoſe Tartars who live in the open fields, and have ſcarce any thing to provide, for pleaſure, food, or war, except horſes, there is no country upon the earth which maintains half ſo many, in proportion to the number of people, as ourſelves. I dare ſay they conſume near a fourth part of the grain grown upon the iſland, beſides the produce of paſture land. If we drink up the produce of another fourth in *barley*, and eat our bread ſo much finer, than is common to other nations, however it may ſerve to raiſe a revenue, we muſt in the iſſue feel a ſcarcity. We ſuppoſe ourſelves ſo rich, that upon the leaſt appearance of want we can command the produce of other nations: But the queſtion is, if there are not a hundred who clamour for a ſupply, to one who conſiders how it is to be

paid

paid for. It is only by ballances in trade that we can afford to pay for any thing foreign: and it is evident that beyond the ordinary meaſure which other nations require the produce of *our* ſkill and induſtry, they will *not* take it; conſequently our coin and bullion muſt ſink in proportion to our fantaſtic wants; and it muſt follow, that extravagance in conſumption, in this view alſo, muſt terminate in poverty. Ballances in trade are acquired by frugality, not expence. With reſpect to us, an ability to export our corn, the very commodity we are of late ſo often called upon to *import*, is the firſt object. Whenever this nation is reduced to the neceſſity of importing grain, it is a ſtrong preſumptive evidence that we miſapply our lands, or that

we are prodigiouſly profuſe in expending the produce of them.

We hear of a number of carriages being laid down! Thoſe who lay them down, are perhaps greater benefactors to the public, than thoſe who keep them; the firſt, inſtead of abſorbing, may contribute to the common ſtock; the laſt can do no good, except in their contribution to the revenue. Both are beneficial, but the meaſure muſt depend on the virtue and conſiſtent conduct of the individual. A ſtate will be impoveriſhed where individuals grow poor; and this will happen the ſooner by ſtraining the nerves of property, and creating expence for a temporary revenue: whereas things may be reduced to that equilibrium, that ten millions in the hands of government, may become more valuable than twelve or fifteen.

fifteen were before. But this will lead us too far.

It ſeems as if we were paſt our *zenith* with reſpect to opulency, and the ſplendid part of the effects of it. We have alſo diſcovered the danger of being rich beyond meaſure, in regard to the extravagancy and diſſipation which attend on riches, as their natural appendage. Things are now brought to that iſſue, and ſuch a mutual dependance, that every thing we do to lower the price of the neceſſaries of life, will diminiſh the ſplendor ariſing from a profuſe circulation. The profits which grow from exceſs, carry the appearance of public benefits to the community; but we begin to find they are really private injuries; and as they affect private perſons, muſt ultimately wound the public. This will lead to a new ſyſtem in politics.

politics. We ſhall, by an eaſy tranſition, become leſs giddy in our purſuits. And if we give each other leſs credit for the purpoſes of extravagance and UNNECESSARY enjoyments, we ſhall immediately, as it were, by the ſingular intervention of Providence, become poſſeſſed of great abundance of *neceſſary* ones. In general, we conſume the produce of the earth in much the greater quantity, from the extent of the credit which we give to each other: let us diminiſh it, and we ſhall not conſume ſo much time in idleneſs, nor ſo much property in profuſion, and conſequently put ourſelves in a more manly, a ſafer, and more virtuous condition than we were, and therefore in a more happy ſtate. You will eaſily comprehend, that from the moment we have leſs money

to

to go to market with, the leſs we ſhall pay for the produce of the earth; and thus, without any convulſion in our political œconomy, things will revert to their right and proper order.

The more frugal we are rendered by neceſſity, which is the parent of virtue, as well as invention, and the leſs wanton conſumption we make, our ſupplies will appear the larger, as our deſires are contracted. This will be verified in the quantity and quality of our *bread*; for the rain will not fall the leſs from Heaven, nor our land be the leſs fertile; nor, I hope, will induſtry prevail the leſs. Thus every article on which life depends will diminiſh in price. *Dear* and *cheap* are relative terms: we cannot ſay we pay dear for our bread, but that bread bears a higher price than

than is conſiſtent with the means which ſome of our labouring people enjoy of purchaſing it.

The various articles of our expence are linked together, and increaſed by a *preſumptuous* confidence in the power of credit. It ſeems probable that they will keep pace, either in advancing or falling; but from appearances, the latter will be the iſſue.—Bread being ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the whole community, cannot be ſuppoſed to decline in price, whilſt fleſh, which is conſumed in a leſs degree, keeps up ſo high. Whether it be the ox which feeds on the earth, that we may feed on it; or the grain which grows, and is converted into aliment; what is the difference? The farmer is as thriving as the grazier; and both will feed and clothe themſelves

in

in proportion to the demand for their reſpective commodities, and the quantity of *money*, or quantity of credit at market. The reformation will begin from *neceſſity*, or in other words, by the decline of a *laviſh credit*. As ſoon as the *land-holder*, who is the moſt ſolid property man, finds his credit declining, he will live at a more moderate expence, and the poor will conſequently eat their bread at a lower price; and it cannot be otherwiſe, except they eat *leſs* in *quantity*, or not ſo fine in *quality*.

If any change in the law ſhould take place, whereby the making *houſhold* bread were diſcontinued, and *one* perſon in *thirty* (and I believe the diſproportion is conſiderably greater) was reduced to the neceſſity of buying the genuine bread in queſtion; and

and conſequently paid a penny more for his loaf, than he uſed to do for houſhold bread, it would be abundantly made up to him in the eſſential good properties of his genuine nutritious bread, while the *twenty-nine* would eat better bread than they do now, and a penny cheaper. If the greateſt common advantage ought to have the preference, the evil changes its nature. I ſay this in anſwer to that plauſible argument which is uſed by ſome, in defence of *houſhold bread* under all its diſadvantages, and improbabilities of being brought into common uſe in great towns. Where numbers of people live in a condition above manual labour, they will eat the ſuperior bread when it is ſet before them.

I ſuppoſe that we ſhall fall a little before we fix at the *happy* point which thinking men have in view, who

judge that the life of a ſtate, as well as the life of man, conſiſteth not in the abundance poſſeſſed, but in induſtry and manly virtues. The ſuppreſſion of undiſciplined appetites, and the correction of ſickly fancies, in this view require more than a conſciouſneſs that they hurry us into dangers and difficulties: Neceſſity muſt have a ſhare in the cure. The political and moral ſtate of a people, have a much greater affinity, than great affluence, and the prodigality which attends it, will generally permit them to conſider maturely: But neceſſity co-operating with reaſon is not therefore leſs a virtue.

Whether the evil be unavoidable, or the effect of vice and folly: whether it ariſe from the nature of a conſtitution, or any other cauſe; it is a *crime* to deſpair of the commonwealth; and *folly*, upon any

occaſion, to give up our hopes of national happineſs. I feel myſelf intereſted for the *needy*; and whether theſe be of thouſands *per annum* income, or labouring for ten-pence a day, they are, in a comprehenſive view, equally objects of compaſſion.

Our parochial laws are a peculiar happineſs: they are ſupported both by our natural genius, which inclines us to humanity; and our liberty which diſdains the thought that one ſubject ſhall exult in profuſion, whilſt another is *periſhing* in want. Our political wiſdom leads us to guard and protect every individual. In this view parochial laws, however defective in the execution in ſome inſtances, are calculated to preſerve the helpleſs infant; the decays of human nature in hoary age; the

the diſeaſed who are helpleſs; the ſickly who are drooping for want of the common offices of humanity; and the unhappy; for how often is the induſtrious virtuous family reduced to extreme diſtreſs, by the chances to which human life is ſubject, in defiance of all their care! Parochial laws proclaim the wiſdom of the early days of *Elizabeth!* (*a*) And the finger of Providence in ſucceeding ages, has pointed out what man ſhould be to man! If there is indolence, ſeverity, and folly, ſometimes found on the part of the pariſh officer, and extreme

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(*a*) If we pay a million or more *poor's-rate*, it is not above 1 in 60 of our charge of living; and in return the Poor labour: If they were all provident, for this plain reaſon, that neceſſity is the parent of induſtry, the value of the labour performed might be 10 in 60 deficient.

worthleſſneſs in the *pauper*, yet ſtill the laws ſtand upon a rock.

To apply this to our preſent caſe, we may conſider *bread* as the moſt eſſential part of our nouriſhment, and upon which the preſervation of the rich and poor, depends.

P. S. In peruſing what I have ſaid, I do not find any reaſon to alter my *opinion*, or my *computations*, though I think ſome parts of my letter require a little more explanation.

I remember, upon occaſion of the enquiry in 1767 and 1768, that ſome eminent men in the trade, declared their opinion, that the whole evil, with regard to the act of 8 *Anne*, compared to the 31 *George* II, aroſe from dropping the *intermediate wheaten bread* of the former, which, though

though ſtiled wheaten, is ſimilar to that which we now think of: at the ſame time it is evident that this act had occaſioned a *confuſion*, and had been therefore neglected.

To me it ſeems obvious, that the making a law for three or four ſeveral diſtinctions of bread, which from the quality of wheats, and the difference of ſeaſons, muſt often change appearances, it muſt as often perplex the buyer, as to the *true quality* of his bread.

With regard to the adulteration practiſed by whitening of bread *(a)*, it was about the year 1748 that the emulation of Bakers to make their bread white, to pleaſe the eye of the populace, was carried to that enormous height, that they brought

(a) Page 12.

allum into general uſe; and were not unſuſpected even of uſing chalk, bean-flour, and other ingredients. However this might be, in 1749 the whole fraternity of Bakers was actually ſummoned by one of their principal members, with a view to prevent the uſe of allum, as an abominable practice. It was to no purpoſe, except that it was ſuppoſed to lay the foundation, of altering the table of aſſize, as if this would have proved a remedy with reſpect to the *falſe* whiteneſs of bread. To this day the Bakers have their ſecret cloſet for their petrified flour, allum, and other adulterating materials. I have heard ſome of them pretend they cannot make bread of all the flour purer than is the *wheaten* now in uſe: if they *will whiten all their bread* this may be true:

but

but it is meant to prevent the temptation.

In regard to the produce of wheat *(a)*, the dryer it is the more it will render; the weather makes ſome difference. I have ſaid that three-fourths of the weight of wheat will not always turn out all real flour; it may include 2 to 6 lb. of fine pollard; but when it happens ſo, it cannot be in the leaſt unpleaſing to the conſumer, being only 1 or 2 in 100 lb. From prime wheats, more than three-fourths will be flour; but we may take for granted, that it will not therefore be loſt; for every Miller will bolt out the moſt flour he can.

As to the bread of *all the flour* propoſed, however it may be ſet forth

(a) Page 18, 19.

on

on paper, I imagine, and I find myſelf ſupported by ſome of the *firſt* in the trade, though *they* are intereſted, that the middle price between the two, *viz.* 7*d.* will not give ſo much profit as the *wheaten* bread now does; and it is upon this principle that I rather wiſh to ſee ¾*d.* paid, *i. e.* three-farthings *per* loaf gained, to the public on 8*d.* than a *penny*. If 7¼*d* will ſecure the quality of the loaf, and 7*d.* will leave it defective, the former is elegible. The Mealmen clearly diſcerned this difference, in 1768, and therefore oppoſed; for otherwiſe it would have been a matter of no concernment to them. Let the object be twiſted and turned ever ſo much, the great principle is, that ſo much be gained by the manufacturers of bread,

the

the public providing for ſo uſeful and important a body of men, and at the ſame time ſeeing that juſtice be done both to the poor and the rich.

With reſpect to what our bread is *now* made of, it might with propriety have been obſerved *(a)*, that if our preſent *wheaten* bread is *really* made of ſtuff leſs fine than the *houſhold flour*, without any mixture of the other kind of flour, ſo much the greater overplus or gain than the 5*s.* 3 *d. (b)* there will be, i. e. on the two quarters: and if the *houſhold* bread is really made of finer ſtuff than is computed, ſo much the more is loſt by it, on the compariſon with the *wheaten* bread.

When I ſpeak of the magiſtrate *(c)*, with reſpect to the allowance made

(a) Page 45, 46. *(b)* Page 45.

(c) Page 39, 40.

made to Bakers, I mean the *London Magiſtrates* and *London* Bakers; for the *London* magiſtrate conſiders the price of wages and labour, houſe-rent and proviſions, in this metropolis; for that which may be little enough for ſuch *London* Baker, may be too much for one who lives in the country, free from the ſame inconveniences and heavy charges.

The objections which are made, as if bread of all the flour of the wheat would not come ſo cheap to the conſumer, as the fineſt part of it, the former haſtening digeſtion, are extremely abſurd. This has been urged by Mealmen; but the ridiculouſneſs of the refinement muſt be apparent, from the conſideration, that if all the inhabitants of theſe cities, were to eat only the *fine flour*, the refuſe muſt

muſt neceſſarily be given to people in the country, who from their labour require moſt nouriſhment.

The argument, that ſtrength ariſes from the bread the leaſt eaſy to digeſt, is not ſuch as the nature of the ſubject will by any means admit of: it proves a great deal too much. Would it be cheaper for the *Dutch* to eat only the heart of the wheat, than the whole of the meal, as I have told you is the caſe of the common people in the United Provinces? Granting that when people firſt begin to eat bread ſomewhat leſs fine, it may paſs moſt eaſily; yet that very facility in the animal œconomy, ſhall expand the powers of animal life, and give energy to this animated frame, the human body. This I believe we

we may venture to refer to the college of phyſicians.

It is difficult to determine the medium price of the charge of manufacturing (*a*), it depends ſo much on the different ſeaſons of the year, the wages of ſervants, and the higher or lower price of the yeaſt. If we confine it to the latitude of *London*, the magiſtrates allowance of 12 s. *per* quarter, is computed at a rate that ſuppoſes occaſional alterations in the charge; and I believe it alſo ſuppoſes, that the Baker now and then gets a loaf or two more than the 96 *per* quarter which is commonly computed on.

As to the *diviſion of flour*, and the price which Mealmen ſet upon it, you will obſerve that I have accommodated it to the price of the wheat, though

(*a*) Page 43.

though Mealmen differ in this reſpect, and you may plainly perceive, how eaſy it is to augment the quantity of the fineſt or *houſhold* flour, and by a ſkilful diſtribution gain 1 or 2 s. *per* quarter. It is not natural to ſuppoſe that the 5 s. 3 d. (*a*) on the two quarters, which I have *computed as gain*, centers in the Baker, when the Mealman can appropriate it to himſelf.

I allude to the *wheaten* bread: as to the *houſhold*, you perceive (*b*) this gives no living to the Baker. Upon the principle I diſtribute the *qualities* and *prices*, making an eighth part of the whole to be *ſeconds* (*c*), *I* only make out the value of the wheat; *they*, you may be ſure, will make more.

I In

(*a*) Page 45. (*b*) Page 47. (*c*) Page 44.

In regard to the *manner of computing the value of my loaf*, I have confined myſelf to the making it always of an equal weight, agreeable to what has been the uſage here, with reſpect to the peck-loaf, and its diviſion into four parts *(a)*. In this I think myſelf the more juſtified, upon the principle which I argue, *viz.* that the people may underſtand, if the quarter of wheat renders 336lb. of flour, and 14lb. of flour make a peck-loaf of 17lb. 6oz. in weight, they may all know what bread they ought to have, and of what quality it ſhould be. And when the price of grain alters, the difference being in the price of the loaf, this will be no leſs intelligible. In the mean time, the Baker can more eaſily underſtand that 2s. advanced in the price of a quarter of wheat, will raiſe the aſſize on

(a) Page 6.

on a peck-loaf one penny, than he can accommodate the weight of his loaf to ſuch an alteration; I think it would diſtreſs him, as well as the *poor man* who buys the loaf; he alſo would find it more difficult to examine whether he has his weight or not, than to pay his additional farthing in the quartern loaf (*a*): it is to be preſumed, that the paying the farthing will create a leſs mortification, than to feel the diminution of the quantity which he uſed to eat: and if he is always to pay the *ſame price*, the good ſeaſon will not rejoice him, though his having more in quantity may induce him to conſume the more. And if he would be more at the mercy of the Baker

(*a*) I have mentioned the uſefulneſs of coining farthings, in page 49, and why not half farthings alſo? This would teach the poor the value of money, which they ſometimes forget as much as the rich.

by the alteration of the weight, than by the alteration of the price, the uniform weight ſhould be conſidered as his greateſt ſecurity. However, if he can eat his bread pure, and cheaper than he uſed to do, be it one way or the other, the conſequences cannot be ſo conſiderable as to obſtruct the operation of any act of parliament, that may provide the beſt kind of bread.

In regard to our foreign traffic in in *horſes (a)*, if we were to receive 35 l. each for 2000, which ſeems to be an ample computation, the value is 70,000 l. The queſtion is, if we have not annually imported a much greater value in *oats* for ſome years paſt: If we have, ſuch a trade can naver turn to account, eſpecially when it is conſidered that a horſe conſumes the

(a) Page 63.

the produce of *two* acres of land, whilſt an ox doth not expend the growth of one and a half: If for the ſake of horſes, we are alſo become great importers of *tallow*, it cuts double againſt us.

If we do not grow *three millions* of quarters of oats (the quantity ordinarily computed) at this time, to what good end are we improving of land? To improve land, and yet not provide the oats we have occaſion for, and at the ſame time to import tallow alſo, ſeem to be two demonſtrative proofs that we are lighting our candle at both ends.

Thus, my friend, I have given you as ample a detail, as the preſent ſtate of my health, and the variety of my avocations will permit. Make what uſe of it you pleaſe; and be aſſured

of

of the ſincerity of my wiſhes and endeavours for the public welfare: When theſe are founded upon chriſtian principles, they ſeem to be the moſt comprehenſive charity, they include every individual. This, I truſt, will cover the multitude of ſins. I am, with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt ſincere

and obedient ſervant,

23 OC 62

Red-Lion Square,
30 Jan. 1773.

J. H.